

15 further 1-minute speeches on each side.

HONORING MARINE LANCE CORPORAL DEAN OPICKA

(Mr. KAGEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, several days ago, Marine Lance Corporal Dean Opicka was killed in action while serving our Nation in Iraq. Dean was 29 years of age and is the third Luxemburg-Casco High School alumnus killed in Iraq.

David and Donna Opicka of Casco, Wisconsin, are the proud parents of Dean, who graduated from Luxemburg-Casco High School in 1997.

Dean joined the Marines in August of 2005 and graduated from boot camp at Camp Pendleton, California, in November. He was a brave member of the Milwaukee-based 2/24 Fox Company.

William Shakespeare, in his play, "Julius Caesar," wrote, "Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once."

On behalf of every citizen in these United States I wish to express our sincerest gratitude to Marine Lance Corporal Dean Opicka. To his parents and family, this House of Representatives expresses our deepest regrets on his passing and thanks for his service.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

In honor of Dean Opicka, I respectfully request a moment of silence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All Members will stand and observe a moment of silence.

IN APPRECIATION OF THE DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

(Mr. SMITH of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise today in appreciation of the brave men and women of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Earlier this week, I had the opportunity to tour the DEA's anti-meth lab training facility as well as the chance to briefly speak to agent trainees. Meth leaves lives destroyed and communities shaken to the core. These agents have literally devoted their lives to protect our communities and deserve our thanks for their efforts to combat the scourge of illegal drugs.

Though the number of meth labs in America has decreased since 2006, Mexican drug cartels are creating super labs, which produce a huge percentage of the meth in our country. This is why I introduced the Meth Kingpin Elimination Act last year, which would increase penalties on drug manufacturers and smugglers.

Meth abuse and production knows no borders, and I thank the instructors and students at Quantico for taking time to show us how important it truly is to win the war on drugs.

IRAQ AND OUR TAXES

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, yesterday our constituents filed their tax returns, but I wonder how many American taxpayers realize that the average tax return will be consumed in less than half a second in the Iraq war. When we grant the President the additional \$100 billion he is asking in emergency funding for Iraq, we will be spending \$5,000 a minute and \$12 billion a month in a lost cause.

The American taxpayer is still paying for Iraq's garbage collection, their schools, their health clinics and their roads. When the Iraqi people themselves are running a surplus. They have almost \$70 billion in accumulated surplus now.

The last couple of years, they have had \$100 billion come in from oil revenue, and they budgeted it at about \$55 a barrel. It is now about \$112 a barrel. They are generating an enormous surplus that they don't know what to do with, and a whole lot of it is being stolen.

And yet we are paying still to collect their garbage. There is something wrong with this picture and the American taxpayer needs to stand up and speak out about it with a full measure of outrage.

CRIME

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, according to the Department of Justice, one person is assaulted in the United States every 7.2 seconds, raped every 2.7 minutes and murdered every 31 minutes. That means that in the last hour, 500 Americans will have been assaulted, 22 raped and 2 murdered. Congress can and must do more to protect American families and keep our communities safe.

In this Congress, Republicans have introduced over 100 bills to help Federal, State and local law enforcement officials combat crime. To date, though, only three have been considered.

As we recognize National Crime Victims' Rights Week, Congress should do more than just honor the victims. Let's help law enforcement officials shield an innocent person from assault, protect a woman from rape and save a life.

TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE ACT, A GOOD GOVERNMENT TAX BILL

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, as millions of Members filled out their tax returns this week, many were con-

cerned that their hard-earned tax dollars will be sent straight to Iraq. We have already spent \$44 billion rebuilding Iraq, and the war costs our Nation about \$12 billion a month.

We have families struggling here at home that can't pay their bills, are losing their homes, don't have health care, and the Bush administration is spending \$12 billion a month on a war that shows no end in sight and no plans for success.

Our monthly investment in Iraq translated into approximately \$339 million every single day. Taxpayers are probably wondering how could we better invest that money here in the United States. The \$339 million we spend in Iraq a day could provide 48,000 homeless veterans with a place to live or we can assure 317,000 kids receive their vaccinations and live a healthy life.

House Democrats vow to fight to ensure that American tax dollars are used to rebuild America, not Iraq.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER IN AMERICAN LIFE AND HISTORY

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today as a member of the bipartisan Congressional Prayer Caucus to formally acknowledge the importance of prayer in American life and American history.

Today I am honored to launch the first of what I hope will be weekly reminders of our country's need for prayer. I do so by reading a proclamation given by President Ronald Reagan in 1983 when he said, "From the birth of our Republic, prayer has been vital to the whole fabric of American life."

As we crossed and settled the continent, built a Nation in freedom, endured war and critical struggles to become a sentinel of liberty, we repeatedly turned to our Maker for strength and guidance in achieving the awesome tasks before us.

Whether at the ordeal of the Revolutionary War, the stormy days of binding the 13 colonies into one country, the Civil War, or other moments of trial over the years, we have turned to God for His help. As we are told in II Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

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CCDBG AND HEAD START FUNDING

(Mr. SESTAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about increasing support and funding for the Child Care and

Development Block Grant and the Head Start programs. We know these two Federal programs provide critical resources to support our Nation's children, educators and working families.

At a time when almost 12 million children under age 5 are currently in child care, the resources for their care and early education continue to be stretched after 7 straight years of nearly flat funding. The stagnant support for these programs has caused thousands of children to lose child care assistance, and fewer children today attend Head Start programs than 6 years ago.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start are proven programs that lead to increased cognitive and social development. The programs greatly improve the ability of children to succeed in school. Increased funding will also promote greater employment among parents through less time missed from work, higher incomes, and reduced rates of turnover.

In my State of Pennsylvania, over 522,000 children under age 6 need care because the parents are hard at work trying to provide their children with opportunities for success. That is why I support increased funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and the Head Start and Early Start programs. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

AMERICAN VICTIMS OF HAMAS

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, yesterday SHELLEY BERKLEY and I, along with 55 of our Democratic and Republican colleagues, sent a bipartisan letter to President Carter calling on him to cancel his meeting with Hamas leader Khaled Meshal.

The State Department lists Hamas as a foreign terrorist organization, and Hamas terrorists are responsible for the murders of at least 26 American citizens, some of them teenagers, children and infants.

Here are two of the victims, 3-month-old Shmuel Taubenfeld and 3-year-old Tehilla Nathanson. They are the faces of American citizens with their light extinguished by Hamas terrorists.

If you live in Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Ohio, California, North Carolina, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, or Florida, then Americans from your State have been murdered by Hamas.

President Carter, do not meet with the man who ordered the deaths of our fellow citizens.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

MCCAIN DOESN'T UNDERSTAND

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, the presumptive Republican nominee for President, John McCain, wasn't kidding when he said he didn't understand the economy. He has proposed a gas tax holiday. Now let's think about it for a minute. Gas today costs three times as much as it did in 1993, but the Federal gas tax hasn't changed since 1993. So what is the cause of the big run-up?

Well, it might be the \$40 billion record profit at ExxonMobil and the \$400 million exit given to their last CEO. That might be part of it.

It might be the OPEC cartel colluding to drive up the price of oil and restrict demand. Or it could be the hedge fund speculators and others on Wall Street driving up the cost unnecessarily so they can make money.

But the nominee of the Grand Oil Party, the GOP, he's not going to take on Big Oil. He's not going to take on Wall Street. He's not going to take on OPEC. What he is going to do is cut Federal investment in our crumbling infrastructure, put hundreds of thousands of construction workers out of jobs, and condemn even more Americans to being jammed on congested highways that need improvement and bridges that are collapsing where we don't have the money to rebuild.

HONORING HOMETOWN U.S.A. PROGRAM

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an organization in my district in Leesburg, Florida, that is making a difference for the people of Florida.

Florida's Hometown U.S.A. was formed to instill in Florida's youth the value of volunteer service. Students from across the State are selected each year to participate in the program. Each year five students are selected from elementary school to high school as participants. The volunteers' focus is on helping children and the elderly by providing food, clothes, personal care items, and assistance wherever it is needed.

Each year the organization holds its Florida Hometown U.S.A. pageant, which serves as its main fundraiser. Florida's Hometown U.S.A. program has received recognition for the positive impact and outcome it has achieved in the local communities.

I want to congratulate these fine young volunteers, especially the fine young students who are selected every year, and especially program director Linda Watts, for all she has done over the past 22 years. She has enhanced the community of Leesburg which I represent. Thank you, Linda, for all of your hard work. Keep up your hard work for the program, and God bless you.

SETBACKS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(Mr. WEINER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WEINER. Madam Speaker and ladies and gentlemen of the House, our bipartisan efforts to isolate terrorism and terrorists and to find a lasting and secure peace in the Middle East got two setbacks this week from sadly predictable sources.

First, the United Nations appointed a human rights inspector by the name of Richard Falk whom my hometown newspaper, the Daily News, correctly called "the nutty professor" because of his position, as he goes into this job of overseeing human rights, that the Israelis are like Nazis. This is who they appoint to try to come to a peaceful human rights conclusion in that part of the world.

And then, sadly, we had another chapter in how not to be a former President from Jimmy Carter who goes to the Middle East, and rather than trying to pursue peace, embraces Hamas, the organization responsible for hundreds of rockets falling in Israel.

It is hard to imagine two institutions or two people that could be more of a setback than these two. The United Nations once again shows that they are unfit for their role of trying to find a moderate and lasting peace in that part of world. And, sadly, Jimmy Carter continues to write a chapter about how not to be a former President.

HONORING THE MEINEKE COMPANY

(Mrs. MYRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MYRICK. Madam Speaker, I would like to honor the Meineke Company today and their efforts to employ ex-offenders who have participated in the Second Chance Program.

Meineke is one if not the first national company to actively hire ex-offenders returning from prison while also promoting opportunity within the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Through participation in this program, individuals are ready to not only enter but also contribute to the workforce once they have paid their debt to society. Meineke continues to promote participation in the Second Chance Program at all of its franchise meetings, in newsletters, and through a publication called Second Chance Profiles. This periodical is sent out company wide, and chronicles the personal story of employees who have truly exhibited the meaning of a life-changing experience.

I commend Meineke CEO Ken Walker, Director of National Accounts Dave Holland, and Cordell Riley, President